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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

SECTION 1

SILVER LANE VISION THE SITES THE TEAM

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Town of East Hartford

The Honorable Marcia Lec lerc, Mayor Eileen Bucknell, Development Director Jeffrey Cormier, Town Planner

### JCJ Architecture

Peter N. Stevens, President Peter Morgan, Lead Designer Doug Roberts, Project Manager Chip Melick







established guiding visions, identified opportunities and developed recommendations for the town to implement improvements in this area. This earlier study was partially funded by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). It was also guided by the Silver Lane Advisory Committee. This current study builds on that earlier study to propose some potential approaches to planning and design for these strategically located sites.

This report focuses on four sites along Silver Lane:

- Silver Lane Plaza redevelopment along the north side of Silver Lane
- Retail development along the south side of Silver Lane opposite Silver Lane Plaza
- Residential development at Futtner Farms, on the south side of Silver Lane behind the new retail along Silver Lane
- The Showcase Cinema Site for a combination of town homes, garden apartments and a community center

It will take a coordinated group effort by a variety of visionary and dedicated stakeholders to achieve success for this vision: state and municipal economic development leaders, architects and planners, a range of expert consultants, developers, finance and construction experts. This bold initiative to develop under-used properties to create a multi-use residential/retail/commercial district along Silver Lane will require progressive policy developments by the municipality, an attractive aesthetic vision by the architects and planners, and a robust infrastructure by the expert consultants, together with creative funding by potential developers and lenders.

A new sense of vitality will come to this district with multiple development parcels comprised of a variety of residential units, enhanced retail and commercial venues. This will be a place where people can live, shop and work within the district.

### SILVER LANE VISION

Silver Lane is strategically situated as an eastern gateway to downtown Hartford. With additional connections to I-84 and South Windsor to the north, I-384 and Manchester to the east, and Glastonbury to the south, Silver Lane has the potential to develop into an important retail hub and an attractive venue for new housing units – both town homes and apartments. With a large and already established residential population, major employers nearby, easy access to multiple highways, and an established infrastructure, Silver Lane is strategically poised for successful development and transformation into a new mixed use residential/retail/commercial hub.

Through a Brownfields Area Revitalization Grant (BAR), Milone & MacBroom developed the 2018 Silver Lane Revitalization Plan which analyzed existing physical, environmental and market conditions in the Silver Lane Corridor and



A RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL/COMMERCIAL VISION FOR SILVER LANE

### Challenges:

- The Town of East Hartford is currently revisiting current zoning regulations to enable the highest and best use of these properties. Engagement with the Town of East Hartford Mayor and Development Office will be required in order to find a solution that will best serve development while it appropriately enhances the character of the Town.
- There is currently high commercial vacancy in this area, and there is retail leakage to areas outside the Silver Lane District. These losses may be attributable in large part to the lack of nearby residential development to provide support. With multi-use development including residential/retail/commercial space, this current disconnect between residential areas and retail/commercial areas will be alleviated and enhanced.
- There has been very little recent residential development in this area within the last 30 years.
   This has impaired the ability for the Silver Lane District to attract middle and upper income workers and major employers.
- Pedestrian/cyclist safety
- Some of the proposed residential sites contain large areas of wetlands and flood zones. With thoughtful planning and design, development around these protected areas can be an asset. The wetlands can become creatively designed zones of lush landscape in this dense environment.
- The current built environment along this section of Silver Lane is rather haphazard, with little retail presence along Silver Lane. Existing retail is situated behind large expanses of parking lots. New retail frontage closer to Silver Lane will improve the sense of this area as a vibrant, community and not just a pass through on the way to another destination.

### Opportunities

- New residential units will provide much needed housing for this well-situated neighborhood
- The combination of new retail and new residential units will energize the neighborhood
- Mixed-use residential, commercial and retail will reduce leakage and increase retail traffic from outside the district.

Recent housing at Philips Farm, Goodwin Village and Cartway Lane serve as successful examples of housing to serve as a model for Futtner Farms and Showcase Village.



Philips Farm 55+ community, 2006, 60 units.



Goodwin Village 55+ community, 2006, 56 units.



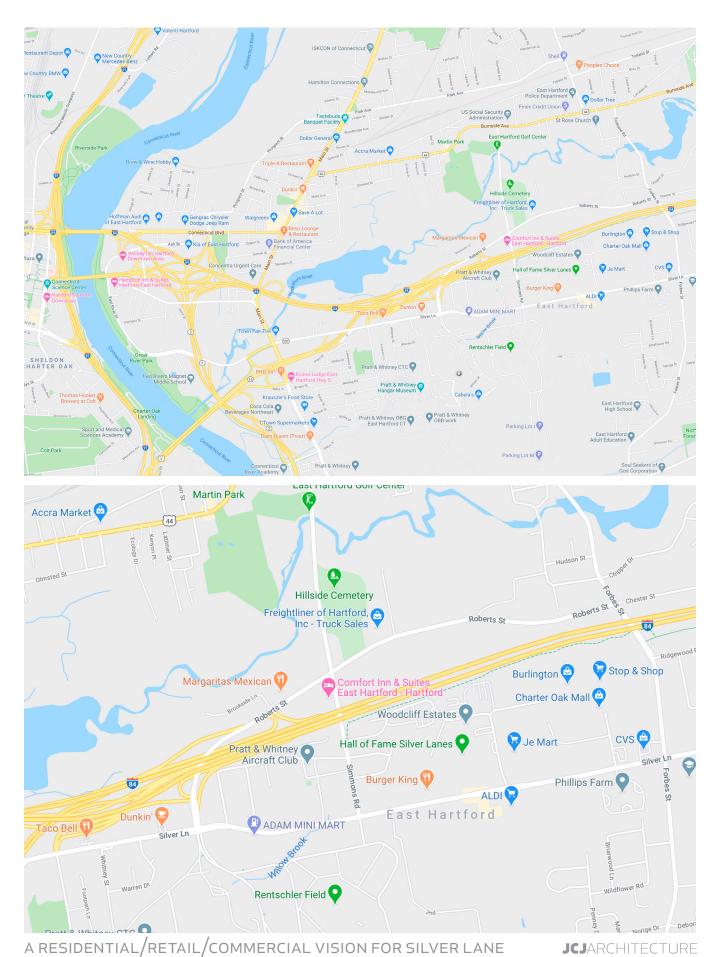
Cartway Lane, 2006-9, 39 units.

# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

SECTION 2

INCOME & WORKFORCE
BUSINESS & INDUSTRY
DEMOGRAPHICS
TRANSPORTATION

**NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES** 





### NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

**East Hartford** is a large community with a small-town feel. Located on east side of the Connecticut River, it sits directly across from downtown Hartford, Connecticut. To the east is Manchester, to the south is Glastonbury and to the north is South Windsor. With a population of 51,252 and an area of 18.7 square miles, it is the 19th largest community in Connecticut.

The East Hartford **Downtown Main Street Historic District** encompasses a well-preserved historical section. It extends along Main Street between
Burnside Avenue and Governor Street, and along
Chapman Street to Chapman Place. Developed in the late 1880's to the early 1900's, its architecture demonstrates the town's transition from an agricultural community to a modern suburb. In 1966 the district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

East Hartford is home to **Goodwin University**, a dynamic and expanding institution.

Raytheon Technologies (formerly United Technologies Research Center) and Pratt & Whitney have a significant presence off Silver Lane. Pratt & Whitney is the largest employer in East Hartford, employing around 9,000 people at the East Hartford site.



Historic Pratt & Whitney building



PRATT & WHITNEY, EAST HARTFORD

# INCOME & WORKFORCE

East Hartford has a mixed workforce of both whiteand blue-collar jobs. It is a town of sales and office workers, service providers, and professionals. Many adult workers in East Hartford are in office and administrative support (16.26%), sales jobs (9.84%), and healthcare support services (6.11%).

	EAST HARTFORD	USA
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$26,374	\$31,117
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$52,049	\$57,652
MEDIAN HOME PRICE	\$163,400	

Approximate Current Rents in East Hartford:

Studio:	740
1Bedroom:	930
2 Bedroom:	1155
3 Bedroom:	1445
4 Bedroom:	1620

According to East Hartford's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, the top employers in East Hartford are:

1.	Pratt & Whitney	9,000
2.	Town of East Hartford	1,698
3.	Goodwin University	720
4.	Coca Cola	600
5.	Bank of America	550
6.	United Technologies	515
7.	Riverside Health	438
8.	CT Bureau of Ent Sys	397
9.	Cabela's	326
10.	DXC Technology	297
11.	CT Natural Gas	263
12.	Red Thread	175
13.	CT Judicial Branch	130
14.	United Steel	127
15.	Clearwater Paper	98



# **BUSINESS & INDUSTRY**

# Recent developments along Silver Lane include:

- Aldi new store 2008
- Dunkin' Donuts new store 2009
- CVS Pharmacy new store 2012
- Dollar General new store 2017
- Burger King renovations 2017

# Additional recent developments in East Hartford include:

- Kia of East Hartford new location at 99 Ash Street 2019
- Dunkin' Donuts new location at 639 Main Street 2019
- McDonald's new façade and renovations at 1261 Burnside Ave 2019
- American Eagle Financial Credit Union new headquarters at 333 East River Drive 2018

# Upcoming Developments in East Hartford

- Goodwin University Gateway Commercial
   Building 365 Main Street
- Goodwin University Manufacturing Annex –
   1 Pent Road



GOODWIN GATEWAY



GOODWIN MANUFACTURING ANNEX



# **DEMOGRAPHICS**

In the model of a contemporary global community, East Hartford is an ethnically diverse community with a racial makeup including:

38% WHITE/CAUCASIAN

28% HISPANIC/LATINO

26% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN

> 6% ASIAN

OTHER RACES

This dynamic creates a  $dynamic\, platform\, for$ continued growth and creates a welcoming environment for future development.

The current median age in East Hartford is 38

 $83^{\!\%}$  of the residents are high school graduates

 $25^{\!\%}$  are either college graduates or are attending college.

The current breakdown of ages is:

0-5	7%
5-17	15%
18-24	10%
25-34	14%
35-54	28%
55-64	12%
65+	14%



### TRANSPORTATION

There are several CT Transit bus stops along Silver Lane serving the City of East Hartford and connecting west to downtown Hartford and east to Manchester. Updating the existing bus stops to provide shelter and enhance the street scape would enhance the development of Silver Lane.

The popular Charter Oak Greenway runs along the south side of I-84, passing through the new Showcase Village and Showcase Garden Apartments. This accessible 16 mile trail provides recreational opportunities for biking, walking, cross country skiing and in-line skating. The trail starts in Bolton, and meanders through Manchester and East Hartford, terminating in Bushnell Park in downtown Hartford.

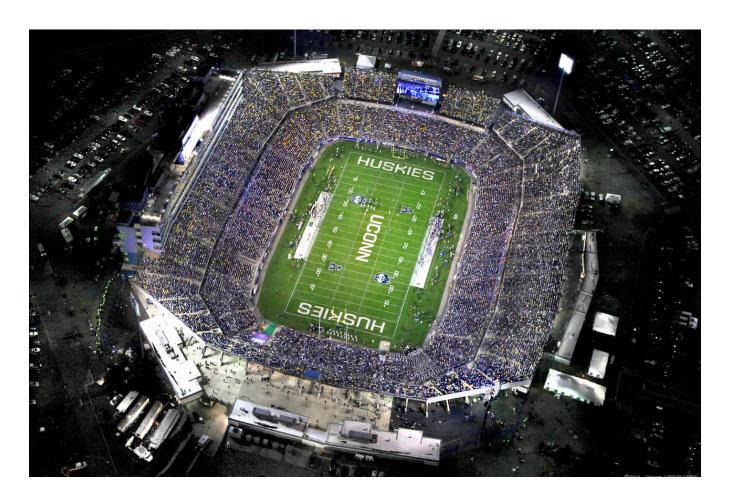
How people in East Hartford travel to work:

79.5% 11.0%

DRIVE THEIR CARPOOL

OWN CAR ALONE WITH OTHERS

1.6% 4.5% work from home take mass transit



# NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

Rentschler Field, University of Connecticut's football team's home field, is a 40,000 seat capacity stadium. It is located on Silver Lane just off the Roberts Road exit off I-84. Regular season games run from the end of August until the end of November. Game days bring a significant number of people to the game to experience restaurant, retail and commercial venues along Silver Lane.

Wickham Park, located in East Hartford and Manchester, feature Japanese gardens, fountains, open fields, woodlands, picnic areas, softball fields, and an aviary. The park is a popular site for weddings and sledding in winter. There are scenic views of East Hartford and the skyline of Hartford across the Connecticut River.



The **Charter Oak Greenway** connects from the waterfront on the Connecticut River at **Great River Park** to towns and communities to the east.

**The East Hartford Golf Club**, a members only golf club under new management, offers beautifully maintained fairways and greens.

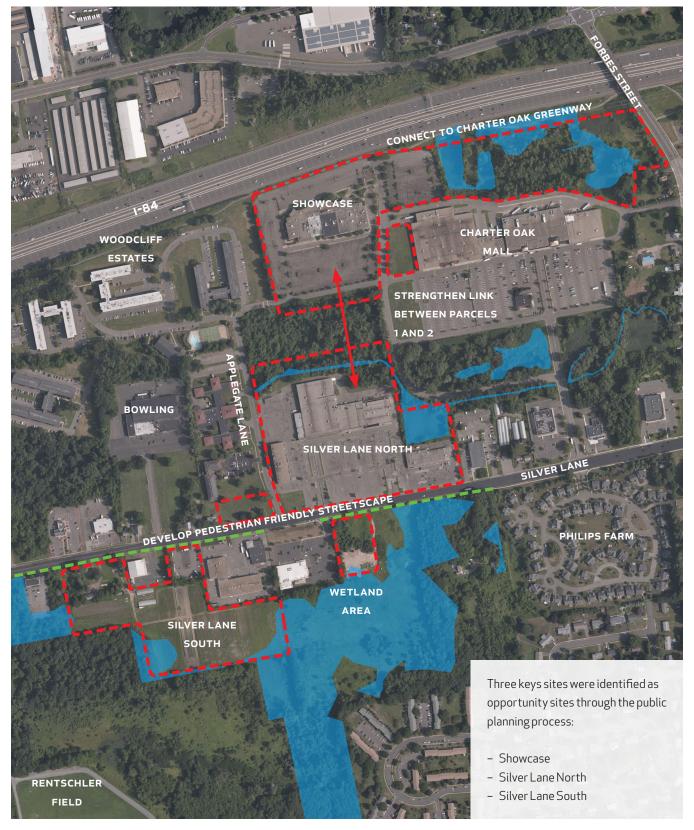
These amenities add valuable open green space to this up and coming neighborhood.



# THE DEVELOPMENT SITES © SILVER LANE CORRIDOR

SECTION 3

SILVER LANE NORTH SILVER LANE SOUTH SHOWCASE



OVERALL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARCELS

### DEVELOPMENT SITES

The proposed development sites include separate parcels straddling Silver Lane between Simmons Road to the west and Forbes Street to the east. The area has easy access to I-84, I-384 and I-91, with direct access from the Roberts Street exit off I-84 to the west and the Silver Lane/Spencer Street exit off I-384 to the east. Connection to these major traffic routes provide convenient access to downtown Hartford and make it a highly desirable location within the larger New England region.

All of the sites have excellent visibility on the highly-travelled Silver Lane. Currently, the Showcase site has visibility along I-84.

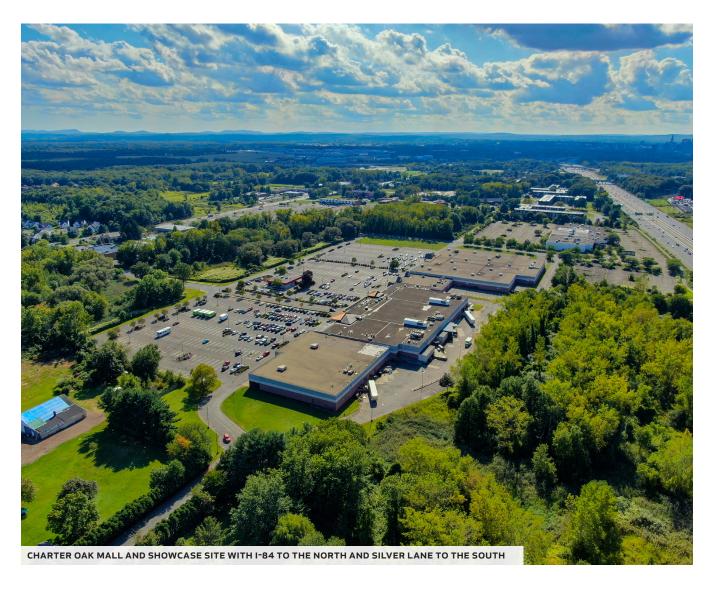
Wetland areas have been defined for the site and are a major consideration when planning redevelopment of the parcels. The area of wetlands are indicated in blue on the drawing on the facing page

The proposed development will include complementary uses of residential and retail components.

The Silver Lane area between Simmons Road and Forbes Street is moving away from big box retail stores to become more community oriented businesses. With two grocery stores, a pharmacy, some food establishments and convenience retailers there is a strong business mix in this area.

Recent East Hartford public planning investigations have proposed the following:

- Improve Traffic conditions and safety in the area
- Create a richer pedestrian environment, including more pedestrian friendly corridors, access to transit and access to the Charter Oak Greenway.
- Improve architectural and urban design aesthetics in the area
- Stimulate private investment



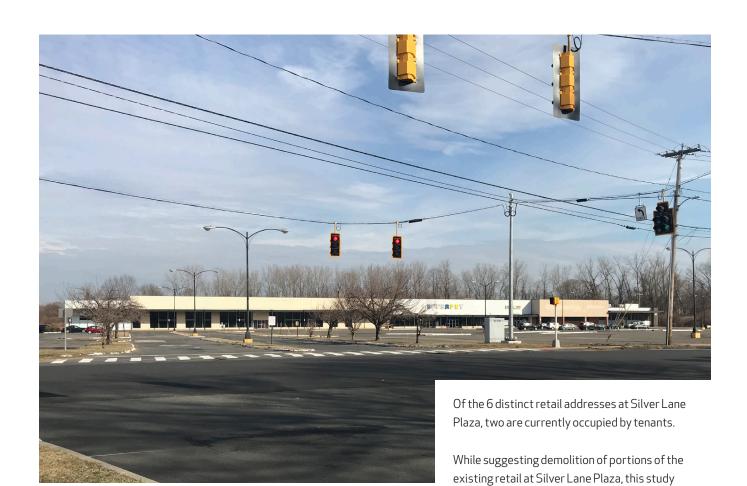
Proposed development sites include:

- Showcase Cinema Garden Apartments and Showcase Village
- Silver Lane Plaza Improvements
- Silver Lane South Retail development
- Silver Lane South Futtner Farms Residential Development
- $\ \, \mathsf{Silver} \, \mathsf{Lane} \, \mathsf{South} \, \mathsf{-} \, \mathsf{Street} \, \mathsf{and} \, \mathsf{sidewalk} \, \\$ improvements

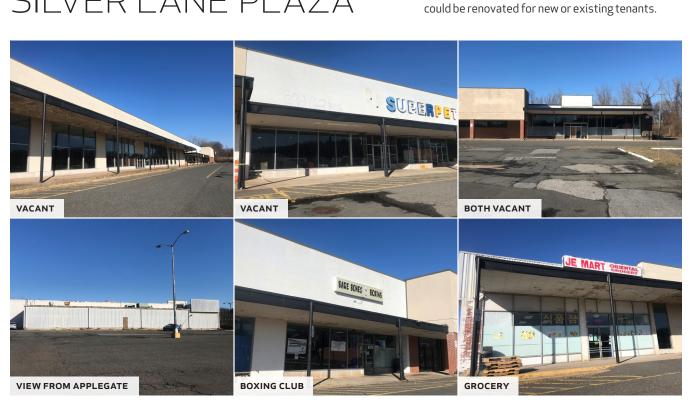








# SILVER LANE PLAZA



proposes replacing it along the street edge in new

construction. The remaining existing buildings





BURGER KING RECENT RETAIL





# **EXISTING CONTEXT**









PROPOSED OVERALL DEVELOPMENT

### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development along Silver Lane at Silver Lane Plaza offers a robust opportunity to revitalize this section of Silver Lane with a combination of retail and residential uses. Renovation of Silver Lane Plaza, together with additional retail adjacent to Silver Lane, will create a new neighborhood retail hub. New retail along the south side of Silver Lane will complement the redeveloped Silver Lane Plaza and enhance the street frontage along Silver Lane. Together with new sidewalks, street lighting, street tress, landscaping, signage, improved CT Transit bus stops and street furniture, this site could provide the impetus for the other development sites. Residential units at Futtner Farms will provide the needed additional users to energize this new retail venue.

The redevelopment of Silver Lane Plaza, along with other retail and infrastructural upgrades will allow for the creation of a new "front door" to the Showcase residential complex. Increased density of new residential units, retail, restaurant and commercial space will help ensure the success of this urban intervention. The residential development of the inner block and the retail development of the street edge will thrive through a symbiotic and interdependent relationship.

Silver Lane Plaza offers a unique opportunity to complete this neighborhood development with new neighborhood scale retail and dining establishments. Silver Lane Plaza could serve as a starting point for the overall redevelopment of Silver Lane.







Silver Lane North, defined primarily as Silver Lane Plaza plus the undeveloped swath of land to the west of Applegate Lane, is one of the areas in most need of re-development. For the Showcase site and Futtner Farms development to be successful, this largely vacant property will require significant upgrades. Currently, three separate buildings float in a sea of underutilized asphalt paving. With the move to more neighborhood sized retail in this district it would be appropriate to consider demolition of portions of the existing shopping plaza, creating renovated "right-sized" tenant space and upgraded facades. This would also allow for the creation of a new front door to the Showcase site.

The fabric of this neighborhood could be characterized as loose to haphazard. Single family residential properties sit next to commercial businesses set far back from the road behind large parking lots. Dominance is given over to the automobile and the pedestrian experience is not considered.

Attracting new tenants to these properties will demand that these and other conditions be addressed.

A RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL/COMMERCIAL VISION FOR SILVER LANE

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- In addition to existing retail buildings on site, new retail buildings could be added along the street edge.
- A portion of the large footprint of the grocery store could be demolished to make room for additional neighborhood scale retailers.
- The eastern portion of the main building could be demolished to provide better access from Silver Lane to the residential areas of the Showcase site. This road could utilize the existing bridge over Willow Brook.
- State bonds could be utilized to purchase all or part of the property to enable redevelopment.
- Tax relief could be provided to encourage façade upgrades and building renovation of the existing buildings
- Building permits and tax abatements could encourage retail/commercial development along Silver Lane.
- The Town of East Hartford could work with the property owner to enhance the frontage along Silver Lane.

 The resulting combination of renovated internal buildings plus new structures along Silver Lane would create an attractive new retail venue to support neighborhood scale retail shops and cafes around an inner block of landscaped parking.

### CHALLENGES

- This location is central to the proposed development sites but is currently perhaps the most derelict property along this section of Silver Lane.
- Much of the space in the three buildings is currently vacant.
- The entire site is built out or paved
- Currently much of the parking areas are empty.
- There may be remediation required behind the dry cleaner
- Overhead utility lines could be buried to enhance the character of the site.
- Flood zone to the north of the property.





# Silver Lane South FUTTNER FARMS RETAIL AND RESIDENTIAL

**DEVELOPMENT**695,709,711 Silver Lane

New retail buildings along Silver Lane, across from Silver Lane Plaza, will create more of a neighborhood feel, and transform this section of Silver Lane into a neighborhood retail center.

The connected parcels behind existing and new retail buildings at 695, 709, 711 Silver Lane provide an opportunity for 46 town homes in a compact, small scale development to support lifestyles of busy, upwardly mobile professionals. These residential units will reflect the scale and style of

the nearby residential neighborhood with a modern interpretation of traditional forms. High ceilings and large energy efficient windows will bring in lots of natural light. A central, shared green space provides open space and a natural focal point to this new neighborhood. Nearby retail, grocery stores, restaurants and pharmacies provide an amenity rich location along Silver Lane with bus service to nearby downtown Hartford.

The proposed development includes a complementary cluster of residential and retail/commercial spaces along the south side of Silver Lane.



The wetlands area, as delineated in Milone & MacBroom's report of 2017, exists largely on the eastern portion of the district. These zones could be kept and maintained as open space amenities to the community.



A RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL/COMMERCIAL VISION FOR SILVER LANE



A RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL/COMMERCIAL VISION FOR SILVER LANE



# Showcase Residential Development SHOWCASE VILLAGE & GARDEN APARTMENTS

936, 942, 944, 960 Silver Lane plus 285, 290 Forbes Street

This 25 acre site consists of six contiguous townowned parcels. It is the site of the former Showcase Theater, plus a spur of land along I-84 to the east for easy access to Forbes Street. The Town will work with a developer to create new Silver Lane Design District zoning regulations for the site to accommodate development. The site is situated adjacent to the Woodcliff Estates apartments and the Charter Oak Mall, home to Stop & Shop and Big Lots. JCJ Architecture has prepared preliminary concept designs for residential mixed-use buildings at the site. The redevelopment of these parcels is critical to the advancement of the revitalization of the Silver Lane neighborhood, which has been underway for several years. The Town is seeking a partner with demonstrated capacity to achieve these goals.

The site wraps the existing Stop & Shop shopping plaza providing a convenient residential/retail mix.

Additional retail venues are located within walking distance. The aesthetics and visibility to the site from Silver Lane will be improved by redeveloping portions of adjacent Silver Lane Plaza and enhancing the access road to Silver Lane. A second road provides additional access to Forbes Street.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Set back from the busy Silver Lane, this quiet enclave of housing abuts an existing green and wetland area for a casual, garden-like lifestyle in this urban environment.
- Views to the surrounding green areas provide a quiet respite from the bustle of the surrounding city.
- A central green area reinforces this connection to the landscape and provides a sense of sustainability to this new neighborhood.
- Access to Charter Oak Greenway

#### **CHALLENGES**

- This site does not have visibility from Silver Lane
- Wetlands limits the available buildable footprint of the site.
- Mitigation of noise from I-84



### SHOWCASE GARDEN APARTMENTS

This site connects the old Showcase Cinema site with Forbes Street along I-84.

The Garden Apartments are three level buildings with 195 units in a mix of studio, one and two bedroom units with access to common areas and shared open space. Some units will have private roof terraces.

The Showcase Garden Apartments reflect the scale and style of the nearby residential neighborhood with a modern interpretation of traditional forms. High ceilings and large energy efficient windows will bring in lots of natural light.

Site Amenities include walking paths, access to the Charter Oak Greenway, and a clubhouse with lounge, pool and community garden. A network of landscaping elements together with smaller scale garden areas will create a unique residential community. Nearby retail, grocery stores, restaurants and pharmacies provide an amenity rich location.

This combined parcel of Showcase Garden and Showcase Village includes 260 units in a mix of row houses and multi-family apartments. The clubhouse includes a fitness center, a pool, community rooms, a small café, and dog wash stations. Other recreational opportunities available on site, include the enhanced Charter Oak Greenway. The town homes and apartments on this site will provide a unique living environment with rich amenities along Silver Lane, and nearby downtown Hartford.







### Showcase Village Rowhouses

The proposed **Showcase Village** is shown as 65 three-story town homes in a mix of two and three bedroom units, with private yards. Each unit has access to open space and use of the community spaces at the clubhouse. Each unit has a private trellised roof terrace and a single car garage. Additional on-site surface and carport parking is available nearby.

This new neighborhood builds on the fabric of single-family homes, apartments and retail in the up and coming area of east Hartford. The Showcase Village homes reflect the scale and style of the nearby residential neighborhood with a modern interpretation of traditional forms. High ceilings and large energy efficient windows will bring in lots of natural light.

Site Amenities include walking paths, access to the Charter Oak Greenway, and a clubhouse with lounge, pool and community garden. A network of landscaping elements together with smaller scale garden areas will create a unique residential community. Nearby retail, grocery stores, restaurants and pharmacies provide an amenity rich location.

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- This is the largest single ownership developable parcel in the area. There are three contiguous properties under common ownership.
- Highly visible from I-84.
- This site could provide a mix of owned town homes and rental apartments.
- Create a more sustainable environment by reducing the amount of impervious surfaces and integrating wetlands and stormwater management into a lush landscape network.

### CHALLENGES:

- Currently zoning is written for commercial use only, and this is proposed as a residential component as part of an overall mixed-use master plan.
- The site does not have visibility from Silver Lane
- A water easement runs across the site
- Shares an access road with Charter Oak Mall
- There is currently a single-story deed restriction on a portion of the site
- Overhead high-power lines cross over a portion of the site.
- Highway noise can be mitigated by swales and landscape features. The developer can engage with the state to add a sound barrier at I-84.





A RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL/COMMERCIAL VISION FOR SILVER LANE

**JCJ**ARCHITECTURE

# **REALIZING THE VISION**

SECTION 4

**GETTING UNDERWAY** 

Recent market analysis suggested several issues for consideration:

- Transitioning to smaller, single occupant retail is a current trend in the area.
- New multi-family housing will be key to providing more local spending power in support of neighborhood retail outlets
- New mixed-use redevelopment, enhanced public transportation and additional recreational amenities could bring new activity to the area by capitalizing on employees form the nearby Pratt & Whitney campus.
- If population growth continues at the current rate, there will be local demand for about 400 new residential units by 2025. These properties should be developed as market rate units.

#### CHALLENGES:

### REALIZING THE VISION

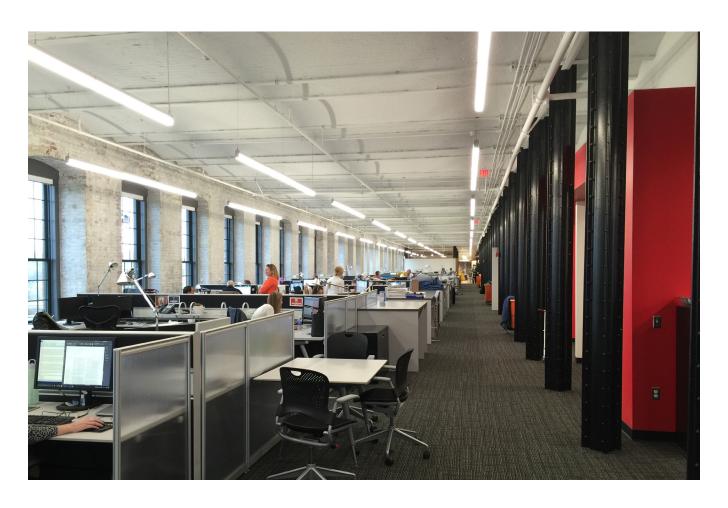
#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Define street edge with retail/commercial at Silver Lane Plaza
- Break current paradigm of parking lots along
   Silver Lane
- Create neighborhood feel with combination of residential/retail/commercial
- Define three separate and unique residential districts with attractive outdoor spaces
- Define three separate and unique residential districts with attractive outdoor spaces:
  - Showcase Garden Apartments
  - Showcase Village
  - Futtner Farms
- Provide a variety of housing options
- Provide a variety of smaller neighborhood retail options
- Create a new energized Silver Lane neighborhood in East Hartford

Some important infrastructure deficiencies within the area need to be addressed. These include:

- Gaps in sidewalks along the south side of Silver Lane from Rentschler Stadium to Forbes Street.
   In order to create more of a neighborhood feel, the sidewalks need to be continuous.
- Numerous curb cuts lead to increased vehicle accidents in the area.
- There is increased ridership on public transportation with CTfastrak, but the bus stops are barren and lacking in amenities.
- There is a gap in the East Coast Greenway linking to the Connecticut River waterfront District.

Improvement to these infrastructure elements will go far to improve the overall character of the District.



# GETTING UNDERWAY

- Engage with Town of East Hartford Development
   Office to maximize opportunity of site and value
   to East Hartford community
- Revisit Zoning parameters and opportunities
- Engage Public transportation
- Study traffic patterns existing and new
- Engage neighboring property owners
- Engage strategic retail / commercial partners
- Promote live/shop/work lifestyle

SECTION 5

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following documents are available through the East Hartford Development Office:

Market Assessment
Site Assessment
Silver Lane Corridor Study
Silver Lane Plaza Offering Memorandum
Silver Lane Revitalization Plan



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P. 49







AN EMPLOYEE OWNED COMPANY

BOSTON HARTFORD NEW YORK

### JCJ.COM

LAS VEGAS PHOENIX SAN DIEGO TULSA